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IDA Presents Downtown Achievement Awards Recognizing Excellence in Urban Place Management

SACRAMENTO, CA – The International Downtown Association recognized the River District with the Downtown Achievement Award of Excellence for its resourceful approaches related to its Public Spaces Team. A jury of peer professionals reviewed, deliberated and evaluated all entries in the 2023 Downtown Achievement Awards. The Award of Excellence acknowledges an excellent response to an urban place management challenge, demonstrating application of industry knowledge and exceeds the jury criteria.

The River District's Public Spaces Team was entered in the category of Public Space Management and Operations which IDA identifies as one of the seven professional urban place management practice areas. This category features unique organizational approaches and projects in the areas of clean, safe and hospitality, placemaking and activation and facilities management.

“We are immensely proud of our Public Spaces Team, which is supported by the City of Sacramento. This innovative program employs individuals with lived experience being unhoused in our district, and helps them navigate the challenging course back into employment. This program offers not only workforce training but life skills, as team members work towards their own goals, all while helping to keep our district clean and safe,” Greta Lacin, President of the River District, said.

Initiated during the Covid-19 pandemic by previous River District executive director, Jenna Abbott, the Public Spaces Team is a collaboration between private property and business owners in the River District PBID (Property and Business Improvement District) and the city of Sacramento. The team members work full time in the district, providing litter abatement, general cleaning and maintenance, and light landscaping services within the geographic boundaries of the PBID. Due to their previous lived experience, often including homelessness and struggles with addiction, the team members are uniquely qualified to interact with residents of encampments, encouraging them to keep their areas cleaned up and to seek assistance with housing, mental health and addiction treatment.

In addition to job training and employment, the team members work with the River District's Public Space Manager to identify their personal and career goals. Regular training sessions are provided in areas such as computer skills, budgeting, resume building and CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles.

“The River District has demonstrated skillful application of urban place management principles with their project, the Public Spaces Team,” said David Downey, IDA President and CEO. “The River District Public Spaces Team should serve as a framework to all member communities within IDA.”

Washington, DC-based IDA is the premier organization for urban place professionals who are shaping and activating dynamic city center districts. The River District is the urban place management organization representing the interests of property owners in the northern rim of Downtown Sacramento, north of the Railyards and bounded on the north and west by the American and Sacramento Rivers.

About the River District

The River District is a public-private partnership formed to improve and strengthen the economic and cultural well being of the area. Working with other nonprofits, the City and County of Sacramento and the property and business owners, the River District strives to attract new commerce and support existing businesses located within the outlined geographic area.

About IDA

The International Downtown Association is the premier organization for urban place professionals who are shaping and activating dynamic city center districts. Our members are city builders and downtown champions who bring urban centers to life, bridging the gap between the public and private sectors. We represent an industry of more than 2,500 place management organizations, employing 100,000 people throughout North America and growing rapidly around the world. Founded in 1954, IDA is a resource center for ideas and innovative best practices in urban place management. For more information, visit downtown.org.

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